

Summary of interview with SSG Shirley Jacobs by Richard Killblane, 25 March 2009.

Sunday, 20 March 2005, SSG Jacobs was the convoy commander of the 4th Platoon, 96th HET of a southbound convoy from Anaconda to Scania. SSG Wilfredo Mojica was the assistant convoy commander. This was SSG Jacobs first time as convoy commander. They were taking the eastern route and had turned on to ASR Bismarck from Detroit. Her convoy had 7 green HETs, 14 white HETs, 3 CEPs, a contract truck with spare parts and a wrecker, a total of 25 vehicles.

She saw smoke off in the distance. Smoke is a common sight in Iraq. Locals burn everything. She then heard on the Sheriff net about an ambush, and when she plotted the grid of the ambush, it was not in the direction of the smoke ahead. She had the wrong grid coordinates and did not think anything was wrong up ahead.

Then Yellow jacket called her on the SINGARS, "I can hear them on the SINGAR. We're close." Yellow jacket was the convoy escort platform from the 1st Battalion, 178th FA. The crew was SGT Smith, PVT Gandy and another sergeant.

SSG Jacobs saw three parked M915s about 300 meters ahead. Smoke was coming from the right hand side of the road behind them. SSG Jacobs planned to go and help. As soon as she passed the first M915, she saw a Soldier bleeding from a head wound [Delancy], a sergeant and a female specialist standing next to him. She pulled up next to the second M915 and stopped.

She called for her convoy to go into a box. Her green HETs alternated pulling in left and right behind the vehicle. The white HETs followed the green HET in front of it. The CEPs went into formation around the box. She had been a DI at Ft Jackson and taught basic training Soldiers the box formation. She called her Soldiers on the SINGARS, "Get out of the trucks and pull security. Do not go to the right side." From the sound of gun fire, she could tell that her right side was exposed to fire. As soon as the TCNs climbed out of the vehicles, the NCOs knew to herd them into the center of the box.

SSG Jacobs, PFC Christy Kirkland (CLS) and SGT Eddie Munos (driver) climbed out of her lead HET and went over to the wounded Soldier in front of the lead vehicle. About that time the gun fire stopped. At that time she saw an Apache helicopter. It had sounded like the gun fire she heard on firing ranges while a DI. PFC Kirkland automatically started triaging the wounded. Jacobs called to SSG Uhl, the other convoy commander, "How many are hit, how many vehicles in your convoy? Have you called for a medevac?" SSG Uhl said, "There are three or four people that I know of." He also told her how many vehicles he had and had already called for a medevac. He appeared unnerved and shaken.

Munos and another sergeant from 4th Platoon went into the kill zone to pick up one more wounded. Munos carried a Soldier with a leg wound, using the fireman's carry, over to

the casualty collection point. Jacobs went to work on the leg wound. A medic worked on the head wound and came over and gave Jacobs and Munos bandages.

The medevac helicopter landed in back of her convoy. Munos, Kirkland, the medic and Uhl transported the two wounded on litters to the medevac. SSG Uhl received a call that another wounded was in the kill zone coming to the medevac. After they loaded the third wounded on the medevac helicopter, Jacobs told Uhl jumped in Shepard's gun truck and drove to the kill zone. The kill zone was about 200 to 300 meters in front of her and about 200 to 300 meters long.

The M915s were traveling north and AFEES convoy was traveling south. She saw a northbound white truck stopped with an RPG hole through the van. She also saw a bus tipped over in the middle of the road. On the other side of the bus from Jacobs was a burning vehicle and an SUV beside it. There was a M915 behind it with its front end crushed. They drove through the kill zone checking for wounded and sensitive items. The rest of the M915 convoy was in a straight line on the side of the road.

Jacobs met and talked with the crew of a CEP. They were shaken up. She asked them if they were with the 1075th? They said, no. They were escorting TCN and AFEES trucks to Scania. The CEP was from A Battery, 263rd FA out of Anaconda. She asked one where the convoy commander was. He said the convoy commander was back counting trucks. Jacobs, Shepard, the driver and gunner walked down looking for the convoy commander. When she found him, she asked if all the trucks were accounted for. He said, no. She then asked, "How many military vehicles did you have with you?" He said, "Three, one is down and another needs to be towed. The other one has two flat tires." She told him that they were hauling battle damaged HMMVs and they could take the tires or whatever they needed off. He called for his mechanic to go get the tires. She told the convoy commander to have his mechanic meet up with her mechanic to get what they needed. He said, "I need you to get your people together and get a count of your vehicles." Jacobs asked how many killed and wounded he had. He responded that he had two killed, one TCN and one who worked for AFEES.

He left and Jacobs went back to her bob tail to send a MTS message to convoy ops. By the time she reached her bobtail, around eight MPs were there and two Apaches flew overhead. She had a long dialog with them. After finishing the MTS dialog, she went down to the other convoy commander to get a count and tell him to have his convoy fall in with her convoy. The MPs were pressuring her to move out. Jacobs told the convoy commander that she wanted two white trucks to fall in behind each of her whites. "Get all your people together and I'll be right back." She got back in her vehicle at the head of the convoy. She waited about 10 to 20 minutes until everyone had changed tires then she called out, "Mount up, we're rolling." The other convoy fell in with hers as planned.